

**Curriculum Development on Africa and Asia for Community Colleges  
Grant Materials Submission: August 2016  
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Secondary Source Analysis

Horror in the East: The Japanese at War 1931-1945\*



The image above, taken at the Pacific War Memorial on Corregidor Island, Philippines, is courtesy of yaowatzup via [Flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/yaowatzup/).

**\*Due to the nature of the events that took place in the Pacific Theater during World War II, please be aware of the graphic content of this selection.**

**EXPECTATIONS**

These questions are to guide your note-taking. Observe instructor directions as to whether or not your responses will be handed in individually, or completed through an in-class review, in order to receive credit for your viewing. Please be sure to ask if you have any questions.

Please treat this project as a traditional writing assignment; use complete sentences, along with details & specifics from the piece to support your statements. The instructor is looking for comprehensive responses that integrate arguments & evidence, along with ideas presented/discussed via classroom material.

## **Part I: TURNING AGAINST THE WEST\***

**\*This selection contains GRAPHIC wartime imagery & content – please be aware of this while watching!**

1. Have the Japanese always treated foreign Prisoners of War (POWs) cruelly? Explain, taking into account context and Japanese policies/expectations.
2. In what ways was the Imperial system in Japan changing – not for the better? (Focus on the perceptions/education regarding the Emperor and the Imperial line.)
3. Who benefited the most from the Emperor being viewed as a ‘Living God’? Explain how those institutions could gain from this. What excuses/justifications did they use for their actions?
4. What was interesting about the training techniques applied to new recruits – towards the 1930s and beyond?
5. How did the military act to shape the civilian population? Why were they critical of Japan’s recent changes? (Take into account the propaganda film clips shown.)
6. Define and explain the Japanese term “*chankoro*.”
7. How did the U.S. react to the Japanese bombing attacks of China in the late 1930s?
8. What happened in December of 1937 at Nanking? (Please summarize some of the key instances of brutality and abuse.)
9. What techniques (& mentality) did the Japanese use when fighting in the Chinese countryside (versus territories held by the Chinese Communists or against Chinese civilians in general)?
10. Why did one interviewee declare he had “no sense of guilt” regarding what he did to the Chinese during the war?
11. Why is the role of the Emperor during World War II debated by historians (as argued in this documentary)?
12. Were Westerners impressed or unimpressed by what they saw of the Japanese armed forces before they attacked their colonial holdings/territories in Asia? Explain.
13. How could the Japanese enter into what is today modern Vietnam?
14. How did the U.S. and Japan head towards a course of war? (Place emphasis on the justifications for the attack on Pearl Harbor.)
15. What conditions & contexts created the situation of the inhumane treatment of enemy soldiers and surviving Prisoners of War (POWs).
16. Summarize some of the key events associated with the Japanese takeover of Hong Kong.

## **Part II: DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR**

1. What were Japanese citizens and (especially) members of the armed forces told about the nature of the Emperor and the sacrifices they were supposed to make? (Military Service Code?)
2. Why did Americans think the Japanese were a “different” type of enemy? How did soldiers and sailors act on that? Did Americas respect the Japanese, for example at Tarawa? Explain with examples.
3. Was the expectation that members of the Imperial Armed Forces had to fight to the death fair to those citizens of Japan? Explain.
4. What did Japanese forces do in New Guinea under the pressures of starvation? Explain the practice as well as government understandings and policies.

5. Explain what happened (and why) to civilians in 1944 on Saipan – and later at Okinawa &/or Tokashiki (around 25 minutes into the video)? Why is this troubling or disturbing?
6. Describe the effects/experiences of fire bombing on survivors in Japan.
7. How could Japan negotiate a “favorable” peace? What were Japanese plans to achieve this? (Understand the evolution of kamikaze tactics and the role of suicide.)
8. Describe the experiences of Kenichiro Oonuki. What does his story reveal about the nature of the Japanese expectations during World War II?
9. What were your impressions of the kamikaze attacks during the battle of Okinawa?
10. Explain the unique nature of the battle at Okinawa.
11. Summarize Japanese treatment of POWs.